EXPOSING TO LIGHT THE CRITICISM AGAINST THE JUCHE IDEA

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PRESENTATION

The Juche idea, the guiding ideology of socialism in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, was and is target of much criticism not only by the bourgeois media vehicles, from who we are already used to reading these types of content, but also by many progressives and so-called communists. Among the latter, stand out, in particular, Hoxhaists and Maoists, those who raise Enver Hoxha as a great defender of the purity of Marxism-Leninism against revisionism and those who follow “Marxism-Leninism-Maoism”, summarized by Abimael Guzmán, leader of the Sendero Luminoso, from Peru, as “the third and superior stage of Marxism-Leninism”.

It is well known that between the followers of both lines there is a lot of friction, as well as between the main leaders of the two sides. However, when it comes to the Juche idea and socialism in Korea in general, they both embark on a common frenzy of criticism, most often frivolous. In an attempt to prove the "purity" and "superiority" of this or that idea, they launch attacks against the country that, at times, even assimilates and adheres to what is broadcast by the media at the service of capital and of imperialism, which is, in fact, something to be scared about, coming from communists.

Given this situation, this article is intended to bring to light the criticisms raised against this idea and Korean socialism in order to provide a reasonable clarification and conclusion of what is really in them.

The original article

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JUCHE IDEA AND MARXISM-LENINISM

The vast majority of criticisms against the Juche idea stem from a misunderstanding of its relationship to Marxism-Leninism. Therefore, it is necessary to properly clarify the relationship between the two ideas before moving on to more specific criticisms.

Marxism-Leninism was where President Kim Il Sung found the ideology capable of guiding the revolution during his studies in Manchuria. With the revolutionary baggage bequeathed by his father, Kim Hyong Jik, a Korean independentist hero, he came to see in this idea the light to achieve liberation and, thus, took it as a guideline in his activities. On pages 231-232 of his memoirs "With the Century," he said:

"I spent night after night reading in my secondary school days. I did not delve into the books with the object of becoming a scholar or for the purposes of a career. How could we expel the Japanese imperialists and win back our country? How could we do away with social inequality and make the working people prosperous? [...]

I am sure it was in the course of this that my position was established of approaching Marxism-Leninism not as a dogma but as a practical weapon and of searching for the truth not in an abstract theory but always in the practice of the Korean revolution. In those days I read *The Communist Manifesto*, *The Capital*, *The State and Revolution*, *Wage Labour and Capital* and other Marxist Leninist classics and books expounding them which I came across."

On page 245 of the same book, he says the following:

"I spent a little more than three years in Jilin. Jilin is a place dear to me, with vivid memories from one period of my life. In this city I came to understand Marxism-Leninism as a scientific theory, and with the help of this theory came to a deeper realization of the practical truth for the independence of Korea and the people's well being."

As we see from these passages, if Kim Il Sung studied Marxism-Leninism and took it as his guide in the revolution, where, then, does the Juche idea enter into this process? During this period, what would come to be called the "Juche idea" was still in an embryonic stage. In the Korean revolutionary process, Kim Il Sung faced many problems involving the application of Marxism-Leninism, from some limitations to obstinate attempts by certain elements to interpret it dogmatically, turning a blind eye to the concrete reality and demands of the Korean revolution. Therefore, Kim Il Sung adheres to the firm attitude of interpreting and applying it not as a complete recipe, but in a creative way, very attentive to the concrete reality, not hesitating to give new answers when Marxism-Leninism could not, and with an independent position, thinking and solving everything from its own vision, with feet firmly grounded in reality, not trying to seek the answers only in the experiences of others and relying on the strength and wisdom of the Korean masses. As is natural, throughout the revolutionary process, the Leader's revolutionary thinking developed simultaneously, as new questions and demands to drive the advancement of the revolution presented themselves.

The birth of the Juche idea is attributed to the Conference of cadres of the Communist Youth Union and the Anti-Imperialist Youth Union held in Kalun, China, where Kim Il Sung presents the report *The path of the Korean revolution*. In this report, the central and most fundamental ideas of Juche are exposed, that the popular masses are the masters of the revolution and that it is in them that the strength to drive it lies, that one must enter among them to educate them and mobilize them and lead the revolution seeing in them the inexhaustible source of strength. Talking about it today may seem simple or even obvious. But knowing the context in which the Korean revolutionary

movement found itself at that time, one can see how important these clarifications were. Among those fighting for liberation there were the nationalists independentists and so-called communists. Some thought they could achieve independence through petitions to powers while others limited themselves to sectarian scuffles, with no commitment to the masses. In this last aspect, the two forces coincided completely. Among the leaders of the Communist Party of Korea, founded in 1925 and dissolved in 1928, there was a terrible attitude of depending on external forces, more specifically, the Soviet Union. They locked themselves in their offices just awaiting directives from the International and, in this way, thought they were leading the Korean revolution. However, as already specified, they went nowhere. It was observing these highly harmful tendencies that Kim Il Sung emphasized, in that report, that it is necessary to go among the masses and trust only in their forces, seeing in them the masters of the revolution, not harboring the illusion that this or that foreign power would grant its emancipation or it could give the paths to reach it.

He said:

"The masters of the revolutionary struggle are the masses of people, and only when they are organized and mobilized can they win the revolutionary struggle. Therefore, the leaders of the movement must go among the masses and awaken them so that they themselves wage the revolutionary struggle as masters. But the self-styled leaders of the communist movement merely indulged in a war of words harmful to the revolution, and gave no thought to awakening the masses and mobilizing them for the revolutionary struggle."

[…]

"Experience shows that in order to lead the revolution to victory, one must go among the masses of people and organize them, and solve all problems arising in the course of the revolution independently on one's own responsibility in accord with the actual conditions, instead of relying on others.

Drawing on this lesson we regard it as most important to take the firm standpoint that the masters of the Korean revolution are the Korean people and that the Korean revolution should by all means be carried out by the Korean people themselves in a way suited to the actual conditions of their country."

By clarifying this, Kim Il Sung illuminated the right course for the Korean revolution, avoiding the mistakes, which are really fatal, committed by other communists and making it possible to lead it rightly.

The ideas exposed in the report are the most basic element of what would come to be formulated as Juche idea in the future, which until then did not exist at all, but, as stated, was in an embryonic stage, growing and developing as the Korean revolution progressed.

Naturally, throughout this process, the Juche idea came to occupy a position different from that of Marxism-Leninism, for having, based on the philosophical clarification that man is the master of everything and decides everything, because he has his 3 essential attributes – independence, creativity and conscience – socially formed and developed, giving new answers to the problems of the revolution, new contributions and more precise paths for the masses. However, this development was only possible because of the theoretical-ideological baggage of Marxism-Leninism, which served as a springboard. Without the invaluable contributions and merits of Marxism-Leninism, it would be impossible for it to exist. However, it is a mistake to say that Juche is the simple application of ML to Korean peculiarities and also that Juche denies or contradicts ML. The two ideas reflect different historical epochs and, therefore, had different developments, faced different issues. The Juche idea gives new approaches, methods and clarifications that Marxism-Leninism could not clarify due to its historical and temporal limitations.

When referring to the originality of the Juche idea, some insist that it denies Marxism-Leninism, that it denies class struggle, dialectical materialism and even that it is idealistic. For all that has already been exposed, one can have a notion that this has no basis in reality, as Marxism-Leninism was the precedent and springboard for the emergence of the Juche idea, which means, precisely, adhering to the dialectical materialism, rejecting idealism and metaphysics, and therefore recognizing class struggle, contradictions, etc.

Let's look at this in more detail.

Let's use as a reference the article North Korea: Socialism is not only anti-imperialism, which starts by making a great confusion between concepts. As explained, most of the criticisms against Juche idea stem from a misunderstanding of its relationship to Marxism-Leninism, and this is exactly how the article begins. As the relationship between the two ideas has generally been clarified, it will not be necessary to repeat here again. The author of the text problematizes the removal of Marxism-Leninism as the official ideology of the Korean constitution. Taking this as a criterion for determining that such an idea is a denial or contradiction of the former is really a strong mislead. The Juche idea went through a long process of development, from taking Marxism-Leninism as a guide for practice, applying it creatively to Korean reality, until reaching its own independent development, taking it as a springboard. But Juche was not limited to just interpreting and applying it creatively, but analyzing its insufficiencies and providing new answers, presented by a new historical era. It is logical that the founders of Marxism-Leninism did not provide answers to all the problems, historical time makes this impossible. There are limitations that, for that reason, only the successor generations could resolve. Let's get into that better later.

The article, then, makes a confusion between "communism" and "Kimilsungism-Kimjongilism", as if the second were a replacement for the first. But that doesn't have the slightest point. Kimilsungism-Kimjongilism is the guideline for the activities and the constant strengthening of the Korean Party and State, it is the integral system of the idea, theory and method of Juche, that is, it has it as its quintessence. It was first formulated by Kim Jong Il as the revolutionary thought of the President and then developed to a new stage by Kim Jong Un.

In the work *On Correctly Understanding the Originality of Kimilsungism*, October 2, 1976, Kim Jong Il says:

“The definition that Kimilsungism is a system based on the idea, theory and method of Juche means that Kimilsungism is consistent with the Juche idea in content and that it forms a system based on the idea, theory and method in composition.

[...]

On the basis of the Juche idea, the leader gave a profound explanation of the theories, strategies and tactics on national liberation, class emancipation and human liberation in our era. Thus it can be said that the revolutionary theory of Kimilsungism is a perfect revolutionary theory on communism in the era of Juche. ”

And in *On socialist construction and the internal and external policies of the government of the republic at the present stage*, April 12, 2019, Kim Jong Un says:

“The major fighting task facing us in our efforts to model the whole society on Kimilsungism-Kimjongilism is to accomplish the cause of building a powerful socialist country.

[...]

The Kimilsungist-Kimjongilist ideas on State building contain a concentrated way the ideas on, and exploits in, State building of the great Comrades Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il, who developed our Republic into the most prestigious and the strongest socialist State in history; these

ideas also indicate clearly the ways and means for accomplishing the socialist cause with the State government as a political weapon."

In other words, this ideology has absolutely nothing to do with replacing communism, but, on the contrary, it is a weapon that makes it possible to achieve it.

Soon after, the article introduces that the idea Juche would have affirmed the end of the antagonistic contradiction between the classes and, therefore, the class struggle as the motor force of history, based on President Kim Il Sung's quote that follows: "organize and mobilize the entire people in building a sovereign and independent State… without being influenced by established theories or foreign experiences." And that, according to him, communism would be achieved mainly through the development of the productive forces, the revolutionization, working-classization and intellectualization of the society, transforming it into men of the Juche type. According to the text, the first quote would be a summary of what the Juche idea according Kim Il Sung and both allow us to conclude that it denies the class struggle as the engine of history, in the same way that Khrushchev had done. However, this is doubly wrong. The quotation's content, in addition to being shallow to talk about a deep theme, is being displaced from its original use to induce the reader to the conclusion the author wants. By "mobilizing all the people in the construction of a sovereign and independent State", the Leader does not mean that the exploiting class and reactionaries are also "united under the common banner of defending the motherland", as the writer puts it, but he refers to the popular masses, the working people, who arm themselves with the revolutionary idea and organize themselves under the leadership of the party to build socialism. Besides, of course, it is a post-revolution context, which in itself would make it absolutely contradictory to try to include the reactionary sectors of the people. Needless to say, because it is a sentence of very few words, trying to understand the entirety of an idea based on it is asking to be mistaken, which leads to thinking that using this to infer such an accusation is a tremendous injustice. As for the second statement, again, the author hides certain important details for understanding the Leader's words. To speak about the transformation of man in socialist society, the ideological and cultural revolution, is to speak precisely about the class struggle that follows after the revolution has triumphed, overthrowing the exploiting class and emancipating the working class, and establishing the socialist regime.

On page On page 228 of volume 21 of his *Works*, May 25, 1967, he states the following:

"The class struggle at the stage of the socialist revolution is a struggle to liquidate the capitalists as a class, and the class struggle in socialist society is a struggle aimed at achieving unity and cohesion, it is by no means a class struggle waged by the members of society against each other. In a socialist society, the class struggle certainly exists, but it is carried on by means of cooperation for the purpose of achieving unity and solidarity. It goes without saying that our present ideological revolution is a class struggle; it is also a form of class struggle to render assistance to the rural areas to working-classize the peasantry."

Just by this quote, the statement of the article can be overturned. The continuation of the class struggle is not only affirmed by the Juche idea but also more deeply and seriously conducted.

He continues:

"Also, within our social system subversive counter-revolutionary influences infiltrate from without and the survivors of the overthrown exploiter classes agitate within; so, the class struggle is necessary to suppress these counter-revolutionary activities.

In this, there is, in a socialist society, a form of class struggle exercising dictatorship over both external and internal enemies, along with the basic form of class struggle which aims to

revolutionize and remould the workers, peasants and working intellectuals through cooperation so as to achieve unity and solidarity.

In a socialist society, therefore, the class struggle does not disappear but continues in different forms. It is perfectly correct to consider the question of the class struggle in socialist society in this way."

In this way, the statement of the text is totally overturned. The class struggle continues in the construction of socialism and has always received the due attention of the Workers Party of Korea, which knew how to give the correct solutions to this issue.

To conclude, let's see what Kim Jong Il says on page 28 of his work *On the Juche idea*, March 31, 1982:

"The process of replacement of an old social system with a new one and the social emancipation of the masses in particular is a process of fierce class struggle. A revolution begins with struggle and ends with struggle. The forces which go in for the preservation of an old social system and life never give up their place of their own accord. A new system and life can be created only through the struggle to wipe out the old forces."

The article then states: "Juche is the opposite of the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist understanding of classes and class struggle under socialism as systematized during China's Cultural Revolution. The GPCR was aimed at revolutionizing society and moving forward towards communism through the collective mobilization of the masses in waging class struggle; it had nothing to do with revolutionizing individuals in a moral sense".

From what has already been described, it can be known that this assertion does not correspond to reality, nor is it logical to compare the two forms of revolution, in China and in Korea. The ideological and cultural revolution carried out in Korea has absolutely nothing to do with "revolutionizing individuals in a moral sense", but it is a deep and massive movement, through the work of ideological education, exchange between city and countryside, the working-classize and intellectualization of all society, the arming of the whole people with revolutionary ideology, the struggle against old ideas, etc. It is clear that the two occurred in different ways and with different implications, so that it is imminent to be misled by blindly trying to compare the two, detaching them from their contexts, proposals and results. However, both are common, among other things, in proposing to achieve the mobilization of the entire people, arming themselves with the revolutionary idea of their leaders to eliminate the remnants of the old society, producing new men and, thus, advancing to the communism.

Then, the article says that "according to Kim Il Sung, 'learning party members and other workers to enjoy work is an important objective' of this (ideological) revolution. Here we are a long way from what the dictatorship of the proletariat and the concrete exercise of power by the working masses is." Again, a very shallow and practically insignificant quote is used to draw a deep conclusion on this topic.

Let's see what the ideological revolution actually means according to Kim Il Sung through his work *Let us step up socialist construction under the banner of the Juche idea*, from September 9, 1978:

"Equipping the whole society with the Juche idea is the ultimate goal of the Government of the Republic. The Government should turn all members of society into communist people of a Juche type and completely transform the whole society in conformity with the requirements of the Juche idea and thus take the ideological and material fortresses of communism.

The struggle to equip the whole society with the Juche idea is, in essence, a struggle to guarantee the full independence of the working masses. The full independence of the working masses demands that the legacies of the old society be eliminated from all domains of social life – political, economic, ideological and cultural – and society be reorganized along revolutionary lines in all aspects of its basis and super-structure. Therefore, if a working-class state is to accomplish the historic task of providing complete independence for the working masses, it should transform the old social system and, at the same time, carry out the revolution in the ideological, technical and cultural fields, too."

Before going any further, in order to properly understand this quote, we need to know what the "independence" the President is talking about is all about. Independence is one of the 3 essential attributes of man clarified by the Juche idea, which presented as the fundamental question of philosophy the position and role that man plays in the world. This, of course, proceeded from the scientific clarification that Marxism had given to the problem of the relation between matter and consciousness. Independence is the attribute that makes man, unlike other living beings, live not subordinate to nature or society, obeying them, but striving to transform them in order to satisfy their demands, becoming their master. It is the attribute of the man who wants to live and progress, exercising the role that corresponds to him as master and transformer of nature and society, a role, once again, determined thanks to the clarification of man's relations with the world. When the Juche idea speaks of man, it does not mean that the force that drives revolutions are private individuals, or that they dominate the world to the detriment of the interests of others, but of him as an integral part of the popular masses, who are the ones who aspire to independence. Man, a social being, has collectivism as an intrinsic demand, he can only live and develop in it, while in capitalist society, which advocates greed and individual interests above collective ones, pitting individuals against individuals, as in the jungle, not only does he not realize his independence, but also suffers countless misfortunes, falls mentally ill, and can even lose hope in life. Therefore, the independence to which the Juche idea refers is, in a nutshell, the level of emancipation, sovereignty, of man, who lives and develops collectively. The more man transforms society and conquers nature, through the development of productive forces and the advancement of science and techniques, the greater the level that his independence reaches. All of this can only reach its fullness outside the society of antagonistic classes, where the masses are socio-politically subjugated by the exploiting class, thus making socialism an unavoidable demand for the realization of the independence of the popular masses. Before returning to the President's quote, let's look at one by Kim Jong Il in his work *On some problems of the ideological foundation of socialism*, May 30, 1990:

"Collectivism is a need of man. He is able to lead a worthwhile life as a member of the social collective. It is also a fundamental requirement to strengthen the might of the social collective. The might of the masses, the driving force of the social movement, depends on how they display collectivism. Unless they are united, they cannot display their might as the motive force of the revolution. An individual can become a member of the collective, but he cannot become the driving force of the rvolutiion which takes charge of the social movement and pushes it forward."

Therefore, realizing the independence of the popular masses is about their emancipation at all levels: political, economic, ideological and cultural, making them play their role in society and the world, which, as the President said, requires launch a dynamic class struggle that continues under the socialist regime.

The article, then, introduces a complaint that many critics of the Juche idea often raise: about the removal of Marxism-Leninism from the DPRK constitution or other references to it. If the Koreans simply stopped saying that Marxism-Leninism was their official ideology, this in itself has

nothing to do with "denying it", "reviewing it" or something like that, but rather with the legitimate development by which the revolutionary ideology of the working class must necessarily pass, given that times change and with it new demands present themselves, demanding new adequate answers, and that there is no omnipotent and complete theory for all countries and epochs. However, the one who imagines that affirming this is a matter of giving indiscriminate freedom to the "development" of ideology, that is, denying that revisionism exists, is wrong. It is obvious that it exists and, since its inception, the Koreans have been careful not to infiltrate it, just as they diligently fought it.

On pages 17-18 of the same work, Kim Jong Il says:

“As for the mistakes revealed in socialist construction in some countries, their parties which allowed dogmatism and revisionism, not Marxism-Leninism and its founders, are to blame for them.

The people who were said to have been building socialism guided by Marxism-Leninism in the past failed to put forward new revolutionary theories in step with the changed historical conditions, as they have applied Marxism-Leninism dogmatically. Dogmatic applcation of the revolutionary theory of the working class means its derogation. The dogmatic attitude towards Marxism-Leninism further exposed the limitations of Marxism-Leninism and rendered it impossible to display the advantages of socialism to the full. In particular, moderns revisionism abandoned the revolutionary principle of the working class and seriously affected socialist construction. Owing to the revisionist policy in several countries, their parties were not built up soundly and their leadership role was paralyzed; society lacked discipline and order, class enemies cut a wide swath and society degenerated ideologically from the influence of bourgeois liberalization.”

Here is a brief explanation of the problem of treating Marxism-Leninism dogmatically, as a perfect recipe for all countries and times. By incurring in this attitude, countless countries suffered setbacks and, in the end, culminated in the collapse of socialism. The same goes for the revolutions that have not triumphed, allied to the tendency mentioned earlier, to expect "help" from external powers, instead of relying on own forces. Of course, this is not just due to treating revolutionary ideology in a dogmatic way, but this is a central factor. However intense and obstinate other factors such as the maneuvers of the imperialists might be, they could be totally frustrated if the leading party were shrewd.

Now, to conclude the topic, it must be emphasized that rejecting dogmatism and blind worship of the revolutionary ideology of the working class does not mean indiscriminate freedom to give up revolutionary principles.

On page 17, Kim Jong Il says:

“We must not deny even the working-class principle of Marxism-Leninism on the grounds that it has limitations. Its limitations are due, in the long run, to the conditions prevailing in that period and to its historical task. We must overcome its historical limitations but not give up the working-class principle that runs through it. To adhere to the revolutionary principle of the working class is a fundamental requirement of the revolutionary cause to realize independence of the masses. Although Marxism-Leninism has limitations and failed to clarify the specific ways for building socialism, those parties that are building socialism can prevent the degeneration of their class character if they correctly maintain the revolutionary principle of Marxism-Leninism.”

Revising Marxism-Leninism or denying it has nothing to do with keeping it written down as an official ideology in a constitution or not, but with how it is treated theoretically and practically. And as has been seen so far, the Juche idea never "denied" or "distorted" Marxism-Leninism, but defended its revolutionary and classist principles while achieving its own independent development, raising new questions and giving new answers to questions that it could not respond in its time. The

two are ideas that reflect different eras, although they are common in the ultimate goal and class character. As has already been said, if so much time has passed, which, in other words, means a long time of development, deepening and systematization of new contributions, what sense would it have to say that the official ideology is Marxism-Leninism? It would be like wanting to remain frozen in time. But as history shows, it doesn't stop, and those who insist on clinging to the past, closing their eyes to the present, are run over, like the many countries that treated it blindly and inevitably went down the same drain. In this way, defending the revolutionary principles of Marxism-Leninism, maintaining the objective of emancipating the working masses, ending the exploitation of man by man and building communism, preserving the character of ideology of the working class and taking it as a guide in struggle and springboard until reaching its own development is precisely the path that the Juche idea has taken.

Before moving on to the next points, there is another controversy that this quote from the Leader raises: the limitations of Marxism-Leninism. This is another thing a lot used by the so-called "anti-revisionists" to attack People's Korea and its guiding idea, so let's see what this is all about.

The article introduces some criticisms that lead to the conclusion that the Juche idea would be contrary to the dialectical materialism of Marxism and that it would be an idealist idea. However, this is absolutely wrong. Not only is the Juche idea not contrary to dialectical materialism, as it firmly adheres to it. Without adhering to it, rejecting idealism and metaphysics, it would be impossible to raise the question of the position and role that man plays in the world and clarify them correctly. That man plays the decisive role in the transformation of the world does not mean, under any circumstances, to deny that it is matter and has its own laws of development, independent of man. The two things don't collide, as if one overpowers the other. It is precisely by understanding the laws of development in the objective world that man can transform it at his will. If man did not have a correct understanding of what the world is, he could never know that he has the power to transform it, falling into the fatalism that everything is in the hands of a "god" or supernatural force.

Therefore, without the invaluable contribution from Marxist dialectical materialism, it would be absolutely impossible to raise such a question and clarify it. It is an essential contribution that is by no means denied by the Koreans.

On page 2 of *The Juche philosophy is an original revolutionary philosophy*, Chairman Kim Jong Il says:

“The Marxist philosophy raised as its major taks the clarification of the essence of the material world and the general law of its motion, whereas the Juche philosophy has raised as its important taks the elucidation of man's essential characteristics and the law of social movement, man's movement. [...] That’s why we should not understand the Juche philosophy as a philosophy that has developed materialistic dialectics [...]”

As we see, tinkering with the materialist dialectic was never something Koreans even set out to do. But taking it as a premise and basis, they shed light on another issue that it did not clarify: the position and role of man in the world, the relationship between the first and the second, which is an unprecedented merit achieved by it. As already stated, the two things have no friction.

To conclude, the Chairman emphasizes on page 3:

“The new outlook on the world established by the Juche philosophy does not deny the world outlook of dialectical materialism. The Juche philosophy regards the world outlook of dialectical materialism as its premise. The Juche view of the world that the world is dominated and transformed by man is inconceivable separately from the materialistic dialectical understanding of the essence of the objective material world and the general law of its motion. From the idealistic view that the world is something mysterious you cannot draw the conclusion that man dominates

the world, and from the metaphysical view that the worldi s immutable you cannot infer that man can transform the world. The Juche view of the world that world is dominated and transformed by man can only be established when the materialistic dialectical understanding of the world that the world is made of material and ceaselessly chances and develops is recognized. In spite of a number of limitations and immaturities of the Marxism materialistic dialectics, its basic principles are scientific and valid. That is why we say that the Juche philosophy regards materialistic dialectics as its premise."

Soon after, the article mentions the limitations of dialectical materialism and inserts a clipped quote linking it to a completely mistaken meaning that has nothing to do with it. About the limitations of dialectical materialism, we've already had a basic idea of what it's all about, so let's cement that better. The limitation of Marxist materialism lies in having mechanically treated social movement in the same way as the natural one, without seeing that it has its own peculiar laws, in addition to the material ones. The fundamental difference between social and natural movement is that the former has a subject, different from the latter. The natural movement takes place in a spontaneous and blind way, governed by its own laws, while the social movement arises and advances through the role of its subject, who drives it actively and consciously. The essential difference between the two arises from the understanding about man. As Marxism did not give sufficient clarification about man, it could never have seen the subject of the social movement in the popular masses and, thus, clarify that it has its own peculiar laws. This is another unique merit achieved by the Juche idea.

On page 5, Kim Jong Il says:

"The social movement, the driving force of which is the popular masses, has characteristics which are different from those of the motion of nature. In nature motion takes place spontaneously through the interaction of material elements which exist objectively, whereas the social movement is caused and developed by the volitional action and role of the driving force. Therefore, if you apply the principles of materialistic dialectics which explain the general law of the development of the material world mechanically to social history, you cannot clarify correctly the essence of society and the law of social movement. The major limitation of the materialistic conception of history is that it failed to correctly expound the peculiar law of the social movement and explained the principles of the social movement mainly on the basis of the common character of the motion of nature and the social movement in that both of them are the motion of material."

Then, the article implies that by stating that the history of social movement is the history of the development of the three essential attributes of man, it means that "ideas and conscience drive the world". This is such a meaningless connection, but again, it starts from an incorrect understanding of the issues discussed above. Affirming this means that the development of the social movement is a process in which the three attributes of man are further developed and has no relation to "ideas and conscience driving the world". It is the man who, by relying on his attributes, can transform the world to serve him. It is clear that throughout the entire historical period the popular masses did not transform the world at will. They were oppressed by the exploiting class, seeing themselves forced to do nothing but their will. Only in socialism, where they achieve their political independence, can they truly become masters of the world and their destiny, by taking over state power and the means of production, overthrowing the exploiting class and fighting to eliminate the remnants of the old society. Therefore, it makes no sense to say that the Juche idea considers that "ideas and conscience drive the world".

On page 11 of *On the Juche Idea*, Chairman Kim Jong Il says:

“Man is the most powerful being in the world, and man alone is capable of transforming the world. It is man and none other that requires it transforming and performs this work. Man acts upon and transforms the world as he desires, drawing on the objective laws. The world is changed for the benefit of man only by his energetic activity.”

Again it must be emphasized that to say that man transforms the world does not mean to deny that it develops according to his own natural laws, but that man, becoming aware of them, plays an active role in its remodeling to serve his life, through his intentional and conscious actions.

In an attempt to frame the Chairman's idea as something "bureaucratic", the article, then, makes use of the statement that "the Party's ideology must be accepted as the absolute truth, firmly defended and maintained as a revolutionary conviction". The Party's ideology is not something created within an office reflecting the will of an individual, but through the concrete practice of the long-standing revolution and synthesizing the demands and interests of the popular masses. Intransigently defending the revolutionary ideology of the party is a fundamental step towards achieving unity and cohesion in its ranks and preventing spurious elements from infiltrating them, such as revisionism, flunkeyism, among other harmful ideologies. What would happen, let us suppose, if the leadership of the party turned against socialism, against the people, against the very ideology it claimed to be following? The Workers Party of Korea has enabled the people to fully deal with such a situation. Attaching great importance to arming all ranks and society with revolutionary ideology, it is entirely possible to thwart something like the seizure of power by revisionists or traitors to socialism. If the broad masses are awake and ideologically armed, organized and with weapons in hand to defend the revolution, such an incident will never happen, as in the former socialist countries. Therefore, defending the Party's ideology has nothing to do with something "bureaucratic", but, on the contrary, with an indispensable requirement for the successful advancement of the socialist cause.

The article, then, enters into the absurdity of mocking the eternalization of Korean leaders, which is really regrettable coming from someone who claims to be a communist. The eternalization of leaders is not a matter of mere symbolic or recognition, much less of "cult" to the leaders, but a firm guarantee that the revolution will never deviate from its path and purpose.

On page 3 of the work *Let Us Brilliantly Accomplish the Revolutionary Cause of Juche, Holding Kim Jong Il in High Esteem as the Eternal General Secretary of Our Party*, from April 6, 2012, comrade Kim Jong Un says:

“His ideology and policies are the permanent guiding principles for our Party and revolution and banners of victory, and their justness and vitality have been proved through our revolutionary practice. Without them, the victorious advance and accomplishment of the cause of our revolution would be inconceivable. If our Party is to lead the Korean revolution along the road of victory and glory as it did in the past, it should hold the General in high esteem as its eternal General Secretary and adhere to strictly and thoroughly implement his ideology and policies.”

Soon after, it cites that, supposedly, comrade Kim Jong Un's texts speak only of patriotism and unity, in order to induce the reader to think that they really have abandoned socialism because, again, supposedly, they are not talking about socialism. Over again, the article uses a single, small, isolated passage to infer a statement a thousand times larger and more categorical. An injustice.

To show that what the author tries to induce the reader to think is not supported by reality, let's see what he says on page 20 of the same work:

“The effort to build a thriving socialist country is accompanied by a serious class struggle to eliminate everything that is hostile and non-socialist. Party organizations should ensure that law-

enforcement organs discharge their sacred mission and duty by staunchly safeguarding the socialist system and the gains of the revolution and reliably defending the people's lives, property and security."

Also, what he says in the work *Demonstrate to the full the might of the socialist patriotic youth league on the historic march towards a fresh victory in the revolution*, from 29 April 2021:

"The greatest, incomparable asset possessed by our Party in waging the revolution, and a source of its greatest pride, is the promising major youth force it has trained as its reliable successor and reserve.

With this asset, we can be confident that our Party and people, by overcoming the trials of today, can open a new era of socialist construction and vigorously advance towards communism." - page 3-4

"Our Party and people expect that the millions of sons and daughters of the country will demonstrate to the world the resourcefulness and mettle of the Korean youth in their struggle to bring earlier the bright future of socialism and communism by carrying forward the baton of loyalty and patriotism bequeathed to them by the revolutionary forerunners." - page 29.

In fact, it is not necessary to go very far to find out which intention of the author of the text does not hold up when confronted with reality, but it is a question of misunderstandings and half-truths, in short. Of course, talking about communism is one thing, working to make it a reality is another. This is a very complex issue that is still subject of much debate among communists today. But when studying the works of the korean Leaders and the historical documents of the Party, one can clearly know that it has taken and is taking vigorous steps towards this goal, through the various works of transformation of society, economy, politics, culture, ideology and man, like those mentioned above. It is not in symbols or in footnotes that we should try to find the answer to questions like these, but in serious and committed study of their works and revolutionary practice.

In the end, the article makes a very strange statement that the real ruling class in the country is, in reality, the "bureaucratic bourgeoisie around the army and the state apparatus", which "oppresses the proletarian and peasant masses and benefits collectively exploitation of their work, without even giving them any possibility of autonomous organization". Indeed, of the entire article, this was the most nonsensical statement. This seems to be the most complete proof of the text's author's lack of commitment to the history of the Korean State and Army and of how both work, to think that there exists a "bureaucratic bourgeoisie" that "exploits the people". Before, the author have asserted that socialism cannot be anything other than the dictatorship of the proletariat, that is, the exercise of power by councils controlled by the proletarian masses. However, power is also exercised in this way in People's Korea. The local and central level bodies are occupied by none other than the Korean popular masses, workers, peasants, intellectuals, artists, military, etc. The same is true in the case of the Party and the Army. Those who promote themselves to high positions get there on their merits, gradually ascending from the lower levels, and are dismissed if they do not fulfill their responsibilities. The examples are innumerable. To cite a recent one, let's look at an excerpt from the news of the enlarged meeting of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Workers Party of Korea on February 28, 2020:

"At the enlarged meeting acts alien to the party, abuse of power, practices of privileges, indulgence in bureaucracy, corruption and irregularities revealed among senior officials of the Party Central Committee and officials of the Party cadre training institution were harshly criticized and their gravity and consequences were sharply analyzed.

The Supreme Leader clarified the analysis of the issues by the Party Central Committee and its stand on them, and dealt strong blows at the acts alien to the party and unpopular and anti-socialist acts brought up for discussion at the meeting. He called on all the Party officials and organizations to draw a serious lesson from the recent incident, to make steady efforts to revolutionarize themselves and their units and bring about a new turn in the Party work.

The Political Bureau of the Party Central Committee dismissed Ri Man Gon and Pak Thae Dok from the posts of vice-chairmen of the Party Central Committee.

The meeting adopted a decision to disband the party committee of the Party cadre training base which was involved in the practices of corruption and irregularities, and to impose relevant penalty."

There is no "bourgeoisie" or "bureaucratic class" in the DPRK, which is a state governed by the popular masses and for the popular masses, with well-established popular working methods and styles such as the Chongsanri method and the Taean work system, that demand that cadres descend to the lower levels to work together with the lower layers, listen to their grievances and resolve it promptly, mobilizing them and doing the political work with them.

Let us now look at the criticisms raised by the article by the hoxhaist Bill Bland: the Workers Party of Korea and revisionism.

The article begins by trying to make a confusion between diplomacy and the official position of the Party and leaderships. First, it speaks of "complete identity of views" between the Soviet and Korean leaders regarding issues concerning the international communist movement, and then the article implies that the WPK would have accepted the Khrushchevite leadership of the CPSU, saying that the CPSU is the universally recognized vanguard of the world communist movement. These two things are, in a nutshell, nothing more than diplomacy and a fact. To say that the CPSU was the universally recognized vanguard of the world communist movement does not mean to say that it agrees with the line it is taking, but to point out a fact. It was the number 1 leader of the world communist movement although it had already entered the path of revisionism some time ago, which is an unfortunate fact. But that is not where we can find the WPK's real position in relation to revisionism.

On page 125 and 273 of volume 15 of his *Works*, in the report on the work of the Central Committee to the fourth Congress of the WPK, September 11, 1961, Kim Il Sung says:

"You must intensify the struggle against revisionism to prevent its infiltration.

You must thoroughly oppose illusions about imperialism, arguments that imperialism is not dangerous or that imperialism has changed. The danger of war will not disappear so long as imperialism exists, nor the aggressive nature of imperialism will change before it perished."

[...]

"Revisionism, a reflection of bourgeois ideology, is still the main danger to the international communist movement. The modern revisionists are scheming to emasculate the revolutionary essence of Marxism-Leninism, paralyse the revolutionary fighting spirit of the working class and undermine the socialist camp and the international communist movement from within; they are coming out as apologists for the imperialism and its reactionary policies.

[...]

Without a relentless struggle against revisionism and dogmatism, the individual Communist and Workers' Parties and the international communist movement as a whole cannot develop nor can the unity and solidarity of its ranks can be ensured. Consequently, the struggle for peace, national independence and socialism cannot be successfully waged."

Through these excerpts, it is much more than clear and evident that the WPK never closed its eyes to revisionism, nor did it let it infiltrate, nor did it praise it; but fought it relentlessly, both in theory and in practice.

Soon after, the article inserts an alleged praise by Kim Il Sung of Gorbachev, calling him a "convicted Marxist-Leninist", referencing an alleged speech by him at the banquet on October 24, 1986, based on the book Foreign Policy of North Korea: The Juche Ideology and Gorbachev's New Thought Challenge, by Dae Ho Byun. Although I could not find this source to check in full, nor in volume 40 of his *Works* Kim Il Sung, which covers the period from May 1986 to December 1987, I will again take it into consideration.

It is necessary to re-emphasize that diplomacy and the official political-ideological position are very different things. To go out attacking everything and everyone indiscriminately, taking into account the circumstances and the dangers, would be an act beyond stupidity, isolating oneself from the allies, which means both exposing oneself to the danger of a conflict with imperialism, as well as facing difficulties in internal works, as one will not have anyone with whom to do any type of exchange. The international position held by the DPRK is to negotiate based on the principles of independence, friendship and mutual benefit, neither part interfering in the other's internal affairs. In this way, it was able to continue relating to all socialist and progressive countries, regardless of the quarrels they might have, which benefited it a lot in its process of socialist construction. On the other hand, the Party's position, as stated above, should not be sought in small diplomatic comments, but in important Party meetings and in the works of its Leaders. And as has already been explained, at no time was the struggle against revisionism renounced or was it allowed to infiltrate. Let's see what Kim Il Sung says on page 225 of volume 40 of his *Works*, in Let us accelerate socialist economic construction by giving full play to the revolutionary spirit of self-reliance, of January 3, 1987:

“Modern revisionism which has appeared in the international communist movement, is also creating a lot of difficulties for our revolution. On the pretext of 'reforming' and 'reorganizing' socialism, the modern revisionists are following the road to capitalism and abandoning internationalist principles. It is, therefore, difficult for us to expect from them cooperation based on internationalism in the building of socialism. What is worse, they are applying economic pressure on un because we do not follow their wrong revisionist policy.”

Here it is clearer than ever who the Leader is referring to. And once again it is categorically confirmed that there was no praise for revisionism, no concealment of it, no space for it in its ranks. It would be possible to place here countless excerpts from works where the Leader criticizes revisionism and indicates the tasks to prevent its infiltration, but it is not the purpose of becoming a collection of quotes. To know his position in the face of these and other phenomena, a very simple thing is enough: **to read**.

Soon after, the author says that in colonial countries the form of revisionism is different from that of developed capitalist countries, and mentions Mao Zedong and Kimilsungism, saying that to some extent they are revolutionary, reflecting the desire of the national bourgeois to carry out the national-democratic stage of the revolutionary process in these countries, but that interrupt the revolutionary process before it proceeds to the socialist stage. Then it talks about the similarities of Kimilsungism with Marxism-Leninism and then of the "revisionist facets" of it, specifying that they are related to the transition period transition to the socialist revolution and to the socialist revolution itself, developing what it had said earlier about supposedly "interrupting the revolutionary process of moving to the socialist stage" Then, it implies that, according to Kimilsungism, the dictatorship

of the proletariat was not necessary in Korea, based on the following quotes: “The democracy we aspire to is fundamentally different from that of Western capitalist countries, nor is it a servile copy of that in a country socialist... ours is a new type of democracy more suited to the reality of Korea.” (Kim Il Sung: *On progressive democracy*, in volume 1 of *Works*, p. 257) and "The establishment of the power of the dictatorship of the proletariat by force was followed as a last resort in some countries... in the northern part (of Korea)... this was not necessary." (Baik Bong: *Biography of Kim Il Sung*, Volume 2; Beirut; 1973; p. 176).

However, it is very wrong. The dictatorship of the proletariat has not been refused in Korea, nor has progress towards it been impeded. The two quotes are taken out of their context to lead to such a mistaken conclusion that it would have been rejected by Korea. In on page 257 of volume 1 of his Works, in the Lecture Delivered to the Students of the Pyongyang Worker-Peasant Political School on October 3, 1945, he says the following:

“Some people are claiming that we should set up “Soviet” power immediately. They do not fully understand the specific situation of Korea.

In the past the Japanese imperialists, who occupied our country for nearly half a century, pursued a barbarous colonial policy, severely restricting the development of capitalism in Korea. Therefore, our country still remains a semi-feudal society. Considerable remnants of Japanese imperialism and feudal relations still exist in our society; feudal relations of exploitation are still prevalent, especially in our countryside.

In building a new Korea we have to take this reality into consideration. Our requirements must neither be below nor above the present level of historical development in founding a state. We must, on all accounts, set ourselves the goal of nation-building which conforms to Korean reality, and correctly lead the masses to its attainment.”

And on pages 357-358 of the same volume, in Talk with the Officials of the Pyongyang Institute and Local Party Organizations While Designating the Site for the Pyongyang Institute, of November 17, 1945, he says:

“Some people say at present that a bourgeois republic should be set up, that Korea should follow the road to capitalism. Others argue that a proletarian dictatorship should be established immediately, that Korea should take the road to socialism. Both are erroneous allegations confusing the people who have come out for nation building. The argument that a bourgeois republic be set up in our country is tantamount to reducing the Korean people to colonial slaves of imperialists again; and the one that a proletarian dictatorship be established in Korea right now is as stupid as trying to feed a toothless infant with bean-mixed rice. We should never set up a capitalist system in liberated Korea nor should we build a socialist society right away, skipping necessary stages in revolutionary development.”

More didactic, impossible. As the President explained, the establishment of progressive democracy was an indispensable step for Korea to get rid of the remnants of Japanese colonization and, then, actually implant socialist power.

Furthermore, the article implies again that a dictatorship of the proletariat would not have been established on the basis of the following quote: “A People's Democratic Republic... must be built through the formation of a united democratic front... that embraces... even the national capitalists”. (Kim Il Sung: *On the construction of the new Korea and the national united front*, October 3, 1945)

Again, taking off from the context. As already explained, Korea had steps to follow, a step in which collaboration with national capitalists and religious elements would be fruitful, which does

not mean that they would exercise any power in the subsequent dictatorship of the proletariat that followed, as the article implies in citing the excerpt “Some people say that our Popular Power does not exercise the dictatorship of the proletariat because it is based on the united front. This is a completely wrong view. Today, our Popular Power belongs to the category of dictatorship of the proletariat”. (Kim Il Sung: *For the successful implementation of the first five-year plan*, in *Works*, Volume 12). As the President says, the fact of relying on a united front does not mean that national capitalists, religious elements and others had any power in it, but only that they served the party's purpose of restoring the country and building socialism.

And the quote continues “In the northen half of Korea, now that we are in the period of transition from capitalism to socialism, the functions of the proletarian dictatorship of our people's power must be strengthened even more”, which was taken from the article.

“Although great achievements have been obtained in our socialist construction, we cannot say that the exploiting classes have now been completely destroyed in the northern half. And even if they have been, ideologies antagonistic to socialism will survive for a long time..

[...] For the triumphant accomplishment of the socialist revolution in the northern half, we must further strengthen our proletarian dictatorship.”

As seen so far, everything that the article proposed could not be sustained when confronted with reality in its entirety. Korea did not prevent the advance to the dictatorship of the proletariat, nor did it deny it, nor did it allow classes other than the working class to exercise power within it, but it did advance in the construction of socialism in view of its peculiarity, not treating the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat as a "law" of Marxism-Leninism that has been "violated", which not even agree with the nature of the ideology itself.

Then, the text, again treating the classics of Marxism-Leninism as insurmountable laws and ignoring the Korean context by trying to treat it based on what has been said of the reality of another country, implies that Kimilsungism would be revisionist for reshaping the national capitalists into workers. It is evident that, not knowing the Korean historical and political context, this seems something absurd, however it was not. Pro-Japanese capitalists and landowners, collaborators and other traitors to the nation were mercilessly expropriated; but on the other hand, the national capitalists, who suffered as much as the working people under the colonial plunder, who agreed to unite under the leadership of the Party in the work of restoring the country from the damage caused by Japanese colonization, were incorporated into various forms of cooperative econom, which represented, in fact, the smallest part of the national economy.

On page 200 of volume 9 of his *Works*, he says:

“The socialist economy is composed of the state and cooperative sectors. Today, it constitutes the leading force in the north and, in particular, holds an overwhelming proportion in industry. At present, the state sector is responsible for some 90 per cent of total industrial production and the cooperative sector 7 to 8 per cent.”

On page 493-494 of volume 27 of his *Works*, Let us strengthen the socialist system of our country, of December 25, 1972, he says:

“The national capitalists in a colonial, semi-feudal society, although inconsistent, have some revolutionary spirit and are keenly interested in the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal, democratic revolution. In the light of these capitalist's characteristics, we won them over to the side of the revolution and carried out the nation-liberation struggle and the democratic revolution with their participation. From the beginning our policy with regard to the national capitalists was not only to carry out the anti-imperialists, anti-feudal, democratic revolution with them, but also to take them along with us to a socialist, communist society. Therefore, we could not expropriate the

entrepreneurs and traders in the stage of socialist revolution just because the capitalists traders and manufacturers were the targets of the revolution. Moreover, we had no need to expropriate them because capitalist trade and manufacturing were totally destroyed in the war and the entrepreneurs and traders supported the Party's line of socialist revolution. And they had nothing, so we could not expropriate them."

This excerpt of his speech is much more than didactic and enlightening. It is inevitable that, trying to analyze one reality from the perspective of another, treating others' propositions as inviolable and omnipotent dogmas, detaching the object of analysis from its context, will incur a grotesque mistake, which should be inevitable for a so-called Marxist-Leninist.

Needless to say, this in no way meant giving power into the hands of those national capitalists who collaborated with the restoration of the country. As in the past, today, there is not a single private enterprise in socialist Korea and not a single capitalist, only the working masses, masters of the country.

The article exposes the forms of cooperatives implemented implying that the capitalists incorporated in them were free to do as they pleased, to the detriment of the peasants, but this could not be further from reality.

On page 185 of volume 10 of his *Works*, the President says:

"Among the agricultural cooperatives, we still have the economic from where the private ownership of the means of production is retained and the semi-socialist economic form where the distribution of incomes is according to the amount of work done and the means of produtiction contributed. However, as of the end of February 1956, these forms applied to only four per cent of all agricultural cooperatives, and they too will be converted completely fo the socialism economic sector in the near future.

Since the agrarian reform, the number of rich farmers has gradually decreased in our countryside. During the war particularly, some of them suffered heavy losses and were reduced to middle peasants or became petty urban tradesmen or manufacturers. At present, the rich farmers make up less than 0.6 per cent of our farm households and their economic basis is weak."

Next, the article goes into the theme of leadership, implying that the Korean conception of this theme is an exaggerated devotion to individuals, and even says it is a "cult of personality", a thesis put forward by none other than Nikita Khrushchev. First, this criticism starts from the misunderstanding of the Korean conception of leadership, considering the leader as an individual separate from the popular masses. The leader emerges in the course of the revolutionary struggle, where he exposes his abilities and aptitude and, thanks to them, wins the trust of the masses, which, in turn, allows him to become their leader. This is the only possible way for a popular leader, whom the masses trust with all their heart, seeing in him the synthesis of their interests and source of leadership. Otherwise, a "leader" trying to impose himself by directives and orders that contradicts the interests of the masses, instead of go in among them to mobilize and listen to them, is nothing but a bureaucrat after power. In this sense, Koreans do not see their leaders as mere individuals who only occupy high positions with no relation to them, but as comrades who fought side by side for the same purpose, uniting themselves firmly with an interest. The leader is the center of the unity and cohesion of the masses. It is a well known fact that without unity there can be no victory and advance. Without a center, fractions are formed, indiscipline reigns and, in the end, a party ends up destroyed and a revolution, unsuccessful. In this way, Koreans never emphasized "loyalty to individuals" but loyalty to the revolution, which means the interests of the popular masses themselves. It is a voluntary loyalty, based on mutual trust and affection between leadership and

people. For this reason, the statement of the article regarding the Korean leadership concept is incorrect.

By entering the theme of "cult of personality" to criticize the Korean experience, mentioning biographies and other praises to leadership, the article ends up falling into a contradiction. It is well known that the same thing referred to in the article as "cult of personality" took place in all other socialist countries, including the USSR and Albania. In this way, if the author intends to criticize socialist Korea as a "revisionist", it will be criticizing the very experience that fiercely defends as the height of socialism and the bastion of Marxism-Leninism. The notion of "cult of personality", Khrushchev's thesis, can only come from an extremely erroneous conception of popular leaders, which is expected from anti-communists, who consider them "dictators" who impose themselves on the people promoting a "cult" of something they are not in reality, which, as already explained, does not correspond to reality.

The article, then, goes into the topic of Juche and Marxism-Leninism, which has already been discussed above, and introduces the issue of foreign investments, joint ventures and ZEEs.

As stated in authoritative sources such as the treatise *On the Juche Idea*, self-reliance was never meant to be autarchy and that would be impossible for a country with little oil reserves as the DPRK. Joint ventures created since 1984 were mostly managed by Chongryon members to organize exchanges between DPRK and Japan bypassing the sanctions. After the fall of the socialist market special economic zones were set up to get hard currency needed to pay importation items and to gain access to advanced technology against imperialist blockade and then use reverse-engineering. But such zones never played an essential role in the country's economy and Kim Il Sung differentiated himself from China and Vietnam on the issue, on page 267 of volume 40 of his *Works*: "At present some countries are following an open-door policy, claiming that they must open the country in order to develop the economy. As a matter of fact, opening the country cannot be regarded as wrong. We should also open the door rather than close it in having economic relations with foreign countries. We do not say that we have opened our country, but we are now engaging in a great deal of economic and technical exchanges with capitalist countries. This means opening the country. We should not draw in foreign capital at random in establishing economic relations with capitalist countries. Our economic development may be a little slow if we do not accept foreign capital. However, since we develop the economy with our own efforts, we will be able to lay solid foundations for the independent national economy, and develop the economy safely, unaffected by any worldwide economic upheavals".

He further explained that joint ventures were not meant to adopt capitalist methods since enterprise management is firmly in the hands of the DPRK, no state-owned asset is sold to foreign capitalists and the country and its workers gain more wealth from such economic cooperation, on pages 13-14 of volume 44 of his *Works*: "In order to develop the country's economy, we must conduct trade, joint ventures and collaboration with other countries. For all that, our officials must not think about running the economy in a capitalistic way. Introducing the capitalistic method in the economic field means taking the road to ruin. The main purpose in trying to realize joint ventures and collaboration with other countries is to make use of their technology and funds. Therefore, we must pursue joint ventures and collaboration in the way that other countries provide technology and funds and we perform enterprise management, on the principle that we gain as a great profit as possible".

About the Juche idea and Marxism-Leninism and the accusation that it would be "idealistic" we have already talked about before, but the article insists that the Juche idea, by saying that man does not live subordinate to nature like other living beings, would be to advocate the "primacy of

the spirit", which is an absurd mistake. When saying that man does not live subordinate to nature, it does not mean that its laws do not act on him, but that he can transform his conditions by knowing them. The animal is limited to living in accordance with what the environment offers, or moving to another environment to seek conditions for its life. In other words, it lives subject to the given conditions, just as it is a victim of the blind movement of nature, which, at times, harms its life. Man, on the contrary, transforms his environment to avoid the damage that the disasters of blind natural movement can cause him and also creates the necessary conditions for his life, which can only be possible thanks to his technical-scientific knowledge and these laws. That is, there is no contradiction or denial of materialism as both sides insist so much. It is clear that in society material and economic factors play a great role on man. However, it is not them who pushes forward the socio-historical movement, but its subject, the popular masses.

On page 7 of *Socialism is a Science*, Kim Jong Il says:

“Of course, objective conditions have a great influence on the revolutionary struggle. But the decisive factor in the victory of the revolution lies not in objective conditions, but in how to strengthen the motive force of the revolution and how to raise its role. Whether in a developed capitalist country or an underdeveloped one, socialism can emerge victorious if the motive force of the revolution is strengthened and its role enhanced through efficient work. History shows that socialism first triumphed in relatively backward countries, not in the countries where capitalism had developed. The experience of our revolution, which has advanced under the banner of the Juche idea, shows that if we strengthen the motive force of the revolution and enhance its role, we can not only avail ourselves of the given objective conditions but also turn unfavorable objective conditions into favorable ones and ensure the victory of the revolution by turning a misfortune into a blessing.”

What he says in this quote is nothing but proven truth in revolutionary practice on countless occasions. Relying on the inexhaustible power of the popular masses, subject of the socio-historical movement, it is possible to go through any adverse situation and register miracles in the revolution and construction, something that has nothing to do with denying the performance of material laws in society.

The article, then, accuses Kimilsungism of falling into "idealism" based on a quote by Chairman Kim Jong Il about the popular masses that what decides whether someone is a part of them is not their class position but the ideology that has, implying that this would be a "denial of the objective definition of class society". However, again, this is a manipulation to induce the reader, who may not be aware of the works of Kim Jong Il, to think that they really have given up the class concept to embrace a "new". However, in the same work, the Chairman states the following on page 19:

“The phrase "the masses of the people" assumes a class character in class society. An exploiter society is divided into the exploiter class and the exploited class, or the ruling class and the ruled class, depending on who owns the means of production and who controls state power. The exploited class, the ruled class, forms the majority of the masses of the people. The class structure of the masses of the people is not immutable. It changes as social history develops. In capitalist society, not only workers and peasants, but also working intellectuals and many other classes and strata which champion and struggle for independence, form the masses of the people. In socialist society, all people are transformed into socialist working people, so everyone is a member of the masses of the people. Of course, in socialist society, too, the maneuvers of minor hostile elements continue and traitors may appear in the revolutionary ranks. Therefore, it is also necessary in

socialist society to clearly distinguish between the masses of the people and elements hostile to them.

The phrase ‘the masses of the people’ reflects a social and class relationship, but it is not merely a class concept. Naturally, the masses of the people consist of different classes and strata. In order to distinguish whether one is a member of the masses of the people or not, his social and class status should be considered, but this must not be regarded as absolute.”

What the Chairman says in this excerpt is nothing but the most concrete truth. It is obvious that the individual's socio-classical situation plays an important role in defining whether he is a progressive or reactionary force, however, it is not absolute, and this can be quickly proved by mentioning some names from the communist movement: Zhou Enlai, Nikita Khrushchev and Friedrich Engels. The first and the last were great revolutionaries who dedicated their entire lives to the cause of socialism, while the second was a dirty traitor who forwarded the first socialist state to ruin. However, the lives and deeds of these figures are in stark contrast to their socio-class origins. Zhou Enlai came from the elite of the Qing dynasty, while Nikita was of working-class background and Engels of bourgeois background. This didactically demonstrates that the role that an individual plays in the revolutionary struggle is not absolutely determined by the socio-class origin from which he comes, but by his ideology, if he arms himself with the communist ideology, organizes himself in the revolutionary party and makes real contributions for the socialist cause. This is precisely what the quote from the Chairman used in the article to imply that "it abandons the class concept and falls into idealism" is about.

The article, then, infers a conclusion that is completely unrelated to the Chairman's statement it quotes. The quote used is not about, again, "rejecting" the Marxist-Leninist principle, that is treated as a dogma by the article, but about that this preceding ideology did not pay attention to another important factor, besides the material: the strengthening of the subject of revolution and the increase of its role. Just transforming the economy is not enough to advance and develop a socialist country towards communism. Much attention is also needed to the work with people, since it is them who makes the revolution, drives the socio-historical movement, operates the machines, and so on. To despise this work is, in the long run, nothing more than digging the grave of socialism. If people are not ideologically prepared, at the first difficulty they will think of abandoning the path of socialism, which is known to be very arduous, to embrace the "freedom" and "prosperity" of capitalism, which is a truth evidenced by history on several occasions.

Then, the article says that Kimilsungism goes against the Marxist principle that the material incentive, of paying according to what is produced, is important in the beginning. But, once again, it completely distorts Leader Kim Jong Il's quote, a distortion that anyone reading would notice. The Chairman does not deny the importance of material incentive; but he criticizes that placing the main emphasis on it is wrong. Because if so, the workers will not consciously strive, knowing that they produce for themselves and that socialism is their regime, that themselve are forging, but only to earn money, which would not differ in any way from work in a capitalist society. Therefore, although the material incentive is important and is given in socialist Korea, the main emphasis is not on it, but on the political-moral.

On page 334 of volume 14 of his *Selected Works*, the Chairman states the following:

“For the socialist economy to be managed properly, political and moral incentives should be given precedence, supported by material incentives. Material incentives should not be neglected on the plea that political and moral incentives should be stressed. Giving one-sided emphasis to material incentives and neglecting them are both wrong. Edification alone is not enough. While strengthening ideological edification among farmers to motivate them to farm with high production

zeal, we should heighten their material interests, so as to ensure that they do not leave even a inch of land idle."

Afterwards, he criticizes President Kim Il Sung about his position regarding a "center" for the communist movement, a central organization to regulate regionals around the world. However, as the quote by Chairman Kim Jong Il immediately after clarifies, the problem related to the International refers to how this center sometimes ended up more harming the activities of other parties than helping, wanting to impose guidelines that did not fit in its realities and demands. Korea itself is an example of this, both during the anti-Japanese armed struggle and later during socialist construction. If Kim Il Sung hadn't maintained an independent line during the revolution, just following the directives of the International, it is a fact that the struggle would have terribly failed.

At the end of the article it says that "Kimilsungism or Juche is itself a type of revisionism designed to serve the interests of the capitalist class of a colonial type country like Korea". Again, I seriously wonder where are these capitalists that both sides talk so much about when accusing Korea. Are they themselves going against their dogmas in the definition of "capitalist"?

SONGUN POLITICS

Likewise the Juche idea, Songun politics could not be left out of the strange attacks made by so-called Marxists against People's Korea. Songun politics is the materialization in politics of the Songun idea, which establishes the importance of the arms for the conquest and maintenance of independence, that is, for realize and carrying out the revolution. In other words, it highlights the importance and role that the army plays in the triumph and advancement of the revolution, placing military affairs as the most important and placing its soldiers in the vanguard of the revolution. It is a fair and accurate reflection of the demands of our times, where never cease the imperialist machinations to repress any popular struggle and, even more, frustrate any dissent from its system of subordination and domination, especially, of course, the socialism, where the system of exploitation of man by man is finally put down.

Making a historical analysis of the Korean revolutionary and constructive process, General Kim Jong Il highlights the People's Army as the main force, as the hard core, of the revolution. And here are born most of the criticisms of this idea and politics. However, as is routine, its about absurd distortions aimed at leading the reader – with little or no knowledge of the subject – to a conclusion that, although it seems reasonable, is completely wrong. Most of the critics take as their starting point the following quote from General Kim Jong Il: "Applying Songun politics, our Party has given prominence to the People's Army over the working class, prompted by a new viewpoint and attitude towards the issue of the main force of the revolution and the role of a revolutionary army in the revolution and construction" of his work *The Songun-based revolutionary line is a great revolutionary line of our era and an ever-victorious banner of our revolution*.

Let us take as our basis the article Why there are no socialist countries today, which reads as follows: "For our learned revisionists, it matters little that written history has been the history of class struggle, because now a corporation is capable of being the force the driving force of history, independent of everything else behind it. The rifle is omnipotent and comes from spontaneous

generation. It's a God!" According to the article, for Koreans, history is not the struggle of the popular masses, but the history of a corporation. But this is very wrong. Songun idea and politics never claimed that the army is the driving force of history, that is a stupid nonsense. The driving force of history and the subject of the socio-historical movement is the popular masses. This is a basic principle established and emphasized by the Juche idea over and over again. And yet, it implies that it all comes down to the corporation, magically. Another nonsense. On page 11 of the same work, Chairman Kim Jong Il says:

"It is not that any army that takes part in the revolution or any socialist army acquires the traits and qualities befitting a revolutionary army and, moreover, can become the main force of the revolution. The working class or the army can become a revolutionary class or revolutionary armed forces and play an important role in the revolution only when it is awakened and organized under the leadership of a revolutionary party."

Here it is very clear how disjointed the article's statement is. The army was not designated in such a way by Kim Jong Il in his work just because it is an army, an armed body. But precisely because, as he explains in this passage and throughout the work, it possesses distinct political-ideological traits, which were formed and developed over the decades of struggle, defense and advancement of the revolution, as a genuine popular and revolutionary army made up of workers and peasants who organized themselves, raised awareness and armed themselves with ideology under the direction of the Party.

Designating the People's Army as the main force does not mean denying the role of the working masses in the revolution. As already said, it is a fundamental principle of the Juche idea that the popular masses are the subject of the socio-historical movement and of the revolution, the force that drives them. The Army enters, contrary to what the critics like to think, precisely as a factor to strengthen them. On page 9, Kim Jong Il explains:

"The question of the main force of the revolution is one of the fundamental problems in strengthening the motive force of the revolution and in developing the revolutionary movement by enhancing its role. Which class, stratum or social collective becomes the main force of the revolution is decided by its position and role in the revolution and construction, its sense of revolution, organizational discipline, and combat capabilities."

In view of the peculiar characteristics, position and role played by the People's Army in the Korean revolution, Kim Jong Il correctly defined it as the main force, as the hard core, to strengthen the subject of the revolution, that is, the popular masses and boost the revolution more vigorously, while consolidating the defensive capacity. But what does it mean to "put the Army at the center, as the hard core, to strengthen the subject of the revolution"? On pages 1-2 he explains:

"The underlying aspects of Songun politics are that military affairs are of paramount importance, that the army is the hard core and main force of the revolution, and that the army must be strengthened in every way. The essential characteristic of Songun politics is that it safeguards the security of the country and defends the revolutionary gains by developing the People's Army into invincible revolutionary armed forces, and that **it builds up the driving force of the revolution** and deals with all affairs of socialist construction in a revolutionary and militant way **with the People's Army as the hard core and main force**."

And on page 10:

"The revolutionary soldier spirit of the People's Army is a noble revolutionary spirit symbolic and representative of the great Songun era. And it constitutes the most revolutionary and militant ideological and spiritual weapon, which makes it possible to create miracles and perform

meritorious deeds in the course of the revolution and construction. In the Songun era the working class, too, can perform its class duty and mission only when it is equipped with the revolutionary soldier spirit, and all the other working people can maintain and add luster to their honour of being the masters of the State and society, their honor of being the socialist working masses, only when they learn from the revolutionary soldier spirit. When the entire army and all the people live and struggle with the revolutionary soldier spirit and fighting spirit, united single-heartedly behind the Party, there will be no enemy in the world strong enough to resist us and no fortress we cannot conquer."

In other words, placing the People's Army at the forefront of the revolution, as the nucleus around which the working masses gather to learn about its revolutionary, organizational and combative spirit means exactly a measure to strengthen the subject of the revolution – the popular masses – and to do them better perform their mission and role as masters of society and revolution and subject of the socio-historical movement, while at the same time, by placing it at the forefront of both socialist construction and national defense, vigorously advance the revolution by relying in its power, which constitutes the brilliant fruit and complete confirmation of the correctness and vitality of this politics, a reflection of the great perspicacity of the Chairman Kim Jong Il.

CONCLUSIONS

In concluding this simple article, which I hope will serve as a starting point for a better understanding of Korean socialism, exposing the main misconceptions and slanders against it, I just want to ask you to read more of the Koreans, who have invaluable contributions and experiences for us who yearn for our revolution, avoiding falling into simplistic definitions and bogus attacks like the ones exposed here.

Special thanks to comrades Dr. Dermot Hudson, president of the Juche Idea Study Group of England and an experienced scholar of the socialist country, and Francesco Alarico, regional delegate of the Korean Friendship Association in Italy, who evaluated and assisted in the production of this article.

I strongly recommend that you visit the website korean-books.com.kp which contains numerous books about the country and works of its Leaders, since it is evidently very necessary to read their works to better understand their ideas and not fall into fallacious accusations. Also, the blog Anglo-People's Korea/Songun, which contains numerous and valuable articles on various topics about the country. Also the excellent channel of comrade Shane, who has always contributed richly to the serious debate on the topic.

The Juche idea, due to its extraordinary contributions and experiences, is nowadays the torch that illuminates the path of struggle for humanity; thus, studying it presents itself as an irrefutable task for all communists.